

21 May 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Rowlett-Hiss Statement - 1976

1. During the time I was a participant in the Cryptologic History Fellowship program (Jan 76-Jan 77) I was asked to be a part of the group, headed by Mr. H. F. Schorreck, which was to interview Mr. Frank B. Rowlett. This interview was to be recorded and included in the NSA Oral History library.

2. During this interview Mr. Rowlett asked that the tape be stopped as he wished to make a statement which he did not want recorded. At this time he informed those present that during the latter period of World War II he had been part of a group of Signal Intelligence people who had monitored incoming Russian traffic on the Moscow to Washington link. This traffic was intended for the Russian Embassy and was encoded. While engaged in this activity representatives of the White House staff became aware of it and the monitoring of this traffic was ordered stopped. I believe Mr. Rowlett felt this order was influenced by Eleanor Roosevelt, but I'm not positive.

3. Despite this order the activity was not stopped but continued with the knowledge of only a very few individuals. Sometime after the order to stop was received a message was intercepted which contained a commission for Mr. Alger Hiss as Colonel in the Russian Army, presumably as a reward for his activity on behalf of the Soviet Government.

4. The statements made in this paper were corroborated by Mr. David Goodman, S03, on 21 May 1980. Mr. Goodman was also present during the interview and remembered Mr. Rowlett making the statements mentioned above and that these statements were not recorded at Mr. Rowlett's request.


Earl J. Coates


Henry F. Schorreck


David Goodman